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## **Workers Remove Iconic Glove Boxes from Hanford's Historic McCluskey Room**

*Glove box removal is major step toward safe Plutonium Finishing Plant demolition*

**RICHLAND, Wash. –** Workers recently finished removing three pieces of history from one of the most hazardous rooms at the Hanford Site in Washington State. The room is known as the “McCluskey Room” — nicknamed after Harold McCluskey, who was standing near a glove box when an explosion inside that glove box severely injured him in 1976. That glove box, and two others in the room, are now gone — as work progresses toward demolishing that room and the rest of the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

A crew with Department of Energy contractor CH2M began final cleanout of the “McCluskey Room” in September 2014. Numerous hazards remain in the room as a result of the 1976 accident, including airborne radioactivity and surface contamination. Since September, workers improved ventilation in the room, applied fixative to limit the spread of radioactive contamination, conducted numerous surveys to determine the extent of radiological hazards. Workers cut apart the contaminated three glove boxes piece-by-piece and packaged each piece for future offsite disposal.

“Safely removing these three glove boxes represents continuing progress in cleaning out and demolishing the Plutonium Finishing Plant,” said Mark Whitney, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management for the Department of Energy. “The demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant will remove a significant Hanford Site risk and will allow cleanup funds to be used elsewhere on the Site.”

The “McCluskey Room” was used to recover americium – a highly radioactive plutonium byproduct – during the Cold War. Worker Harold McCluskey was injured in 1976 when a vessel inside a glove box burst and exposed him to radioactive material. McCluskey, who was 64 at the time, lived for 11 more years and died from causes not related to the accident. Removing the damaged components from inside that glove box was among the more challenging tasks for workers, due to the residual contamination from the incident.

“Using protective equipment never before used on the Hanford Site, the team did a great job carefully preparing and safely executing the hazardous work inside the McCluskey Room,” said Mike Swartz, vice president of the Plutonium Finishing Plant Closure Project. “Our experienced workforce is making solid progress preparing the facility for demolition by September 30, 2016.”

Several chemical processing tanks remain in the room; workers will now focus on preparing those for removal during demolition of the room and the rest of the Plutonium Finishing Plant. Overall, the plant is about 84 percent ready for demolition, with the remaining critical path work being the removal of exhaust ventilation ducting and plutonium processing equipment.

Media available:

- Video footage of the first entry into the McCluskey Room using safety equipment never before used on the Hanford Site: [http://youtu.be/eANRwA\\_29k4](http://youtu.be/eANRwA_29k4)
- Video of preparations to enter the McCluskey Room: <http://youtu.be/K-6bTvzBVA4>
- Video footage of progress inside the McCluskey Room: <https://youtu.be/y1jO9QSO3uY>

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*The Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) manages the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Along with the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP), DOE-RL is responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at Hanford for the nation's defense. Except for the tank waste mission managed by ORP, DOE-RL is responsible for cleanup of all remaining Hanford waste streams and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and solid waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. DOE-RL is also responsible for working with the National Park Service to implement and manage Hanford's portion of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park, authorized by Congress in 2014. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov).*

*CH2M is a global engineering and project delivery company partnering with public and private clients to tackle the world's most complex infrastructure and natural resource challenges. The firm's work is concentrated in the environment, water, transportation, energy and industrial markets. CH2M has gross revenues of \$5.5B, has 25,000 employees and is a specialist in program, construction and operations management and design. CH2M has been the #1 ranked environmental firm by Engineering News Record since 2006. For more information, visit [ch2m.com](http://ch2m.com).*